

REMARKS

Claim 1-56 are pending in the application. Claims 14-32, 40-42, 46-48, 50, 52-54, 56 had been rejected in the parent application, U.S. Application No. 09/685,226, filed October 10, 2000, now abandoned. This rejection is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Claims 1-13 and 22-56 are canceled, Claim 14 is amended and new Claims 57-77 are being added to the application by the present Amendment. All claims are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections

Claims 14-32, 40-42, 46-48, 50, 52-54 and 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on U.S. Application No. 019/187,746 to Himmelstein and U.S. Patent No. 6,324,645 to Andrew. This rejection is traversed. The Applicant respectfully submits that the invention, as set forth in Claims 14-21 and 57-77, is not obvious based on the cited references.

In preferred embodiments of the present invention, the geographic location of a webpage is authenticated to allow for more accurate searching and filtering. *See* Specification, pg. 7, ll. 10-23. An association is made between a physical address of, for example, a company and the company's website. Preferably, the physical address is associated with the website based on information other than the content of the webpage. *See* Specification, pg. 8, ll. 20-24; pg. 10, ll. 22 – pg. 11, ll. 14. This inventive process is considered a ground to web identification. In other words, the invention uses an independent source (e.g., the VISA merchant database, the United States Postal Service street listing database, or Verizon yellow pages database) to determine a known physical location of a company. *See* Specification, pg. 21, ll. 4-7; and pg. 37, ll. 1-10. Based on this information from the independent source, the physical address of a website can be determined and stored as a record in a database. The database contains records of verified physical addresses of websites.

The invention uses the contents of the database to provide a geographic location filter to a query interface. *See* Specification, pg. 7, ll. 19-23. A traditional search engine, such as Yahoo, can use the contents of the claimed database to filter its search results and verify which URLs in

the search results actually match a geographic location. *See* Specification, pg. 33, ll. 3-7 and pg. 33, ll. 24-26. For example, if a user is attempting to find a travel agency in Boston and inputs the following search query, "travel agency and Boston," into a search engine, the search engine can perform its keyword search and then filter any of its search results through the claimed database to identify which URL addresses are actually associated with a physical location in Boston.

Prior art search techniques use the content of the webpage to determine its associated geographic location. This is considered a web to ground approach. Because there is a vast amount of geographically related information on a typical webpage, this approach produces a number of false positives. If, for instance, the query example discussed above was input in a conventional search engine, the search results would potentially include webpages of travel agencies not located in Boston, but offering Boston related information.

Himmelstein's approach is also a web to ground approach and therefore suffers from the same fundamental flaws of the prior art. In particular, Himmelstein describes a spidering process for extracting data from a webpage, essentially looking for city, state, zip, street address, phone, or other geographic information on a webpage that can then be used to determine an associated geographical location for that webpage. Himmelstein also describes developing a dynamic page for an electronic YellowPages listing for a business that has no website. Himmelstein's search engine is very similar to the geosearch prior art at www.northernlight.com, which is described in the Specification at pgs. 1-2. Although Himmelstein also determines a latitude or longitude for the web page, this is derived from information obtained using the web to ground approach, e.g. using city, state, zip, street address, phone, or other geographic indicated in the content of the page.

By way of contrast, the present invention provides a mechanism to localize web searching by verifying geographic information with an independent source. Preferred embodiments of the invention determine a physical address for an entity's website by cross-referencing the address using an independent source, such as a VISA online merchant database or the United States Postal Service street listing database. In this way, the address of the website

is authenticated and the website is tied to its actual physical address. This information can advantageously be used as a geographic search filter for a search engine. None of the cited references discuss this inventive concept.

Moreover, Himmelstein does not discuss how to determine a geographic location for a webpage that does not have any geographically relevant content. Consequently, the Himmelstein approach ignores webpages that do not provide any geographic data, while the present invention uses an independent source to identify the geographic location of a webpage, regardless of whether the webpage has geographic content.

Furthermore, websites are typically comprised of multiple webpages, and Himmelstein's approach would classify each of these pages individually based on their content (e.g. text or metadata). Consider the situation, for example, where a travel agency website has one page, which includes text about Bermuda, and another page, which includes text about Boston. According to Himmelstein, each webpage would be individually classified, one in Bermuda and one in Boston. In the present invention, however, the entire website would be associated with the physical location of the travel agency, which is identified using the independent source.

Addressing Andrew, this reference relates to encryption techniques, and was cited against the claims that relate to an authenticated digital certificate database. It should be noted that although the authenticated data provided by the present invention could be encrypted as a digital certificate, this is not required. The authenticated information, for example, may be stored as database records, in a table, in a linked list or as an SSL encrypted certificate. In fact, the geographically authenticated database or authenticated information described in the present invention is simply verified information. Unlike any of the cited references, the information is authenticated or verified using an independent source.

Thus, neither Himmelstein nor Andrew, in combination or alone, address the problems associated with search engines that produce false positives, nor suggest the solutions presented in

the pending claims. In particular, neither of the reference discuss the following requirements of the claimed invention:

- searching an authenticated digital certificate database to identify electronic documents that match the desired geographic location, as set forth in Claim 14;
- receiving a set of electronic document addresses and a desired geographic location, as set forth in Claims 57, 67 and 77;
- returning an authenticated set of electronic document addresses of the electronic documents which match the desired geographic location, as set forth in Claim 14;
- filtering the set of electronic document addresses through a database to identify the electronic document addresses that correspond to the desired geographical location, as set forth in Claims 57, 67 and 77; and
- the database including information about an electronic document and corresponding geographical location, the geographical location being authenticated using an independent source, as set forth in Claims 14, 57, 67 and 77;

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of the claims based on Himmelstein in view of Andrew be withdrawn.

Claim Amendments


Claim 14 was amended and new Claims 57-77 were added to the application to claim the invention more distinctly. Support for the amendments to Claims 14 and new Claims 57-77 can be found in the application, as originally filed, for example, at pg. 7, ll. 10-23; pg. 8, ll. 20-24; pg. 10, ll. 22 – pg. 11, ll. 14; pg. 21, ll. 4-7; pg. 33, ll. 3-7; pg. 33, ll. 24-26l and pg. 37, ll. 1-10. Thus, no new matter is being introduced. Acceptance is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By 
James M. Smith
Registration No. 28,043
Telephone: (978) 341-0036
Facsimile: (978) 341-0136

Concord, MA 01742-9133

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